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WASHINGTON POST
21 December 1985

Israel Said to Return Spy Papers

U.S. to Lift Intelligence-Sharing Limits Imposed in Pollard Case

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Israel has returned to the United States all the classified documents obtained from accused spy Jonathan Jay Pollard, and a U.S. team that went to Israel received "full cooperation" from that country, the State Department said yesterday.

Charles Redman, a State Department spokesman, also said the United States plans to lift restrictions on intelligence sharing with Israel that had been imposed as a result of the Pollard case.

The investigation of Pollard, a civilian Navy counterterrorist analyst charged with selling U.S. secrets to Israel, strained relations with Israel. But Redman said yesterday "our normal cooperation in all fields will resume." His announcement came shortly after five members of the U.S. delegation returned to Washington.

Officials familiar with the team's work in Israel said delegation members involved in Pollard's prosecution were satisfied with the raw information gathered in Israel, including interviews with Rafael (Rafi) Eitan, said to be a key figure in the spy case, and two Israeli diplomats also implicated with Pollard. But, one source said, U.S. officials will continue to analyze the data before reaching definitive conclusions about the case.

Sources familiar with the delegation's work said team members also view an account of the Pollard case circulating within the Israeli government as self-serving to Israel's political leadership.

According to this account, which was also provided to The Washington Post in Israel, Pollard originally convinced his Israeli contacts that

his Navy superiors had authorized him to establish an unofficial, "back channel" method of supplying U.S. counterterrorism intelligence to Israel. Pollard was believed both because of his intelligence job and because the classified documents he turned over were real, according to this version.

By the time Israeli officials realized that Pollard was not acting as an authorized U.S. source, particularly after he allegedly asked for money, the nature of Pollard's information changed significantly to include details on Israel's national security, according to the account circulating in the Israeli government. Israeli officials were said to have become alarmed that there might be a serious national security breach within their government and decided to keep working with Pollard in hopes of identifying the leak.

American sources said the claim that Israel used Pollard in an attempt to pinpoint a national security leak sounded self-serving but they did not offer any contrary evidence.

In addition, one U.S. official said Pollard may have asked to be paid right from the start, which would mean that the Israelis should have known all along his actions were not authorized.

The account circulating in Israel was supplied to The Washington Post on condition that no attribution be used. The general thrust of the account is similar to a report that appeared Nov. 29 in The New York Times attributed to "a highly placed Israeli source."

In the accounts provided both newspapers, it was said that Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres and other political leaders were un-

aware of Israel's involvement with Pollard, a claim that could serve the Israeli government's interests but that has not yet been disputed.

Calls for a full-scale, independent government investigation of Israel's involvement with Pollard are virtually nonexistent within Israel at the moment. And Israel's normally volatile political environment is relatively quiet on the Pollard case.

The explanation offered by Israeli government sources is that political rivalries have been put aside in the Pollard case because Israel's intelligence operations are vital to the country's security. Political leaders are said to be reluctant to call for a formal investigation that might disrupt the intelligence community's effectiveness.

Some other Israeli politicians, however, suggest leaders of the major parties are reluctant to speak out because the controversial activities of the special Israeli unit linked to Pollard span the terms of at least three prime ministers and three defense ministers.

"Both major sides are involved in it," said Aharon Yariv, a former Knesset member and former head of Israeli military intelligence. "I'm not saying directly involved," Yariv said. But "from the point of view of parliamentary responsibility they are," he added.

The State Department said yesterday that Israel is disbanding the unit allegedly involved with Pollard. Israeli sources have said Pollard worked for the Science Liaison Bureau, a special unit housed in the Ministry of Defense and known by its Hebrew abbreviation Lekem.

According to the account provided to the Post, Lekem's role as an overt intelligence collector quietly was expanded to include clandestine activities long before the Pollard case.

Washington Post staff writers William Claiborne and John M. Goshko contributed to this account.